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tern bank of the wādī. The fields are bone-dry and trimly cultivated, rain being expected this month. One substantial downpour of rain or a good inundation caused by rain elsewhere is said to be enough for this loam soil, which holds water for so long. Great pains have been taken over the irrigation system; the dams, made of piled-up stones and plastered with an inner lining of mud, suffer much from the *sēls*. Groups of inquisitive people come running towards us out of the villages and ask all sorts of questions of our escort. A grey-headed village-chief turns to us with the inquiry how to put an end to the repeatedly recurring destruction of the stone dykes through the *sēl*. We answer that it would probably suffice if they were to use lime as cement for the boulders: the initial cost of this would be considerable, but it would be a great economy in the long run.

All the women of this district are veiled, even the poor women working in the fields. When working in the sun they wear straw hats with very wide brims. They are not so frightened of us as women were elsewhere and are quite ready for a chat or even to be photographed. The young girls, at the request of the men, climb like cats right up to the crowns of the palm-trees, to pick the ripe fruit from the bunches of dates. Their wide black garments hang untidily about them, the only pretty thing in their dress is the broad girdle ornamented with large and small silver buttons, which encircles the waist. An attempt to buy one of these fails, as the women are all too modest to think of selling a part of their clothing. Many children run all over the place with little bows made of the rib of a palm-leaf, and sharp-pointed arrows of the same, with which they try to kill the few birds that alight on the ripening fruit. Occasionally, as we pass, some relative of one of our escort will present us with a handful of the first really ripe dates.

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He cannot resist the wishes of his guests and very soon there is again a crowd of inquisitive people in the sweltering upper room, staring at us and hampering us with questions and loud conversation.

2. PROSE AND POETRY IN WĀDĪ ḤADJR.

We manage, by exercising much insistence, to get off at four o'clock that afternoon. There are two roads to Makalla: one goes direct through the mountains, the other makes a great circuit by following the main wādī as far as the sea and then going up the coast to Makalla. The mountain route is the shortest but the hardest; we are told that it is *too* hard for our camels, who are not strong. Moreover, it would be unsafe for our little company in the mountains, in the absence of an armed escort. Considering that even Little, with a big military escort, was attacked in this country — a sayyid who was acting as his guide was killed in an engagement — we accepted the assertions of the people in Ṣidāra as reasonable and therefore chose the detour by way of the wādī, which however has a bad name for malaria. Little had to contend much with this illness: his escort had to be almost entirely renewed after a short sojourn in Wādī Ḥadjr. We tried to avoid risk by sleeping away from human habitation and, as far as possible, on high-lying, dry ground.

The caravan was under the leadership of a strong, slight Arab, of the name of Dhēb. He had spent his youth as hostage in the Sultan's palace at Makalla. This shows that Ṣidāra some twenty years ago was still a part of the Qeʿēṭī territory, but that the Sultan considered it necessary to strengthen his hold on the country by bringing up the sons of the leading families in his palace. It was to this circumstance that Dhēb owed his education — for this country a very good one — and he was much more cultivated than the other young men of Ṣidāra. In spite of his long hair, his face was handsomer and gentler in expression than is usually the case here. We also had

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with us ᶜAlī, an old and rather sour man, who was proud of being able to read and who faithfully spelt out the names of the places that we passed. When we had gone a little way he asked if we would buy a pair of spectacles for him at the *sūq*, the bazaar, of the Bandar (the seaport town, *i. e.* Makalla) so that he could better read the Koran. Our third man, ᶜAbdallāh, is a very ordinary sort of Bedouin; he speaks little, but startles us time and again on the march by his monotonously ugly and melancholy Bedouin singsong: *"Yā dānā . . . ā . . . ā . . . āl"* etc. Finally there is little Muḥammad, an indefatigable boy of twelve, who is now having his first experience of a journey of this kind and who has never yet seen either the sea or a town. Besides these, a weaver from Makalla has joined our caravan with a baggage camel and two boys. We ourselves have an enormous camel that we call the *fīl* or elephant, a female camel for the milk supply, and a young and slender animal making its first trip.

The caravan leaders here wear a strange kind of sandals. Broad strips of leather cover not only the whole upper part of the foot but extend out beyond the sole, which makes a rustling noise in walking. It is meant to keep off snakes and scorpions, especially on night journeys. Because of the richer vegetation and greater moisture, these creatures seem to be more prevalent here than in the arid interior, where sandals are chiefly worn in the afternoon to protect the feet from the heat of the ground.

Nearly all the men of the village accompany us through the palm-gardens to the river; we wade through the warm water and then come to more date-groves. After that there are *dhura* fields, which finally give place to shrubs, grasses and acacia trees. We make a short cut where the river bends; the fringe of palms continues uninterruptedly beside the water.

Dhēb declares himself ready for *takalluf*, *i. e.* for doing his utmost, so it is perhaps possible that we shall reach Makalla in six days. As soon as we enter the region mapped out by Little, Von Wissmann is able to give up his detailed survey